(c) the action being taken by Government to provide education for the discipline of chartered accountancy as per demand in the country; and

(d) if not, whether Government would take action to ensure availability of chartered accountants as per demand?

THE MINISTER OF CORPORATE AFFAIRS (SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA): (a) to (d) Precise estimates of the number of chartered accountants required in the country at any given time are not available. The requirement for persons having such qualification depends upon the demand for accountancy and audit services in the economy and may vary from time to time.

2. The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India established under the Chartered Accountants Act, 1949, is presently the only Institute which imparts instruction in chartered accountancy courses in the country. There is no prescribed limit of number of seats in the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India. Any eligible student who wishes to pursue the chartered accountancy course can join the course.

3. The Institute has recently taken up the following measures to enhance the availability of chartered accountants:—

(i) Introduction of a new scheme of education in 2006 to facilitate a higher number of students to join the chartered accountancy course.

(ii) Enhancing training opportunities for articled assistants, which is a pre-requisite for the chartered accountancy course.

Upgradation of Jharsuguda Airstrip

*564. SHRI PYARIMOHAN MOHAPATRA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the progress of converting Jharsuguda Airstrip into a regular airport; and

(b) the detailed action plan by the Airports Authority of India (AAI), projected investment and the expected date of completion of the project?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) On request from the State Government of Orissa, the existing airport at Jharsuguda is proposed to be developed for scheduled flight operations for which the State Government has been requested to provide 815 acres of land under a Memorandum of Undertakings (MoU). The response of the State Government is awaited.

Investment in R & D activities

*565. SHRI MAHENDRA MOHAN:
SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the investment both in amount as well as in percentage in the Research and Development (R&D) activities of various Public Sector Undertakings and institutes under the Ministry;

(b) whether it is a fact that investment in R & D is far below the level required for a country aspiring to emerge as economic super power;